

VZCZCXYZ0003  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHNR #2425/01 1531109  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
O 021109Z JUN 06  
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2173

S E C R E T NAIROBI 002425

SIPDIS

NOFORN  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/01/2026  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [SO](#)  
SUBJECT: SOMALIA: A STRATEGY FOR ENGAGEMENT

REF: A. STATE 77563  
[1](#)B. NAIROBI 1824  
[1](#)C. NAIROBI 1653  
[1](#)D. STATE 53551

Classified By: A/PolCouns L. Peterson, Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

[1](#)1. (S) SUMMARY: Post envisions a Somalia strategy that builds on existing counterterrorism contacts and tactics, connecting the ARPFAT with the TFIs, establishing relations with moderate Islamic courts, and developing a network within the Ayr and business communities in Mogadishu. This approach will enhance, but not replace, existing search and seize activities. It will have a follow-on benefit of strengthening the TFIs by assisting with their Mogadishu relationships, potentially drawing in more players that will boost their credentials. Post is ready to launch expanded humanitarian and development activities as soon as resources are available. Efforts to strengthen the TFIs will be largely diplomatic, working in concert with our international colleagues to convey messages of encouragement for progress made and to rein in anti-democratic tendencies. While the TFIs are still exceedingly fragile, they appear unaffected by the fighting in Mogadishu and should be recognized for withstanding a potentially fatal development. This strategy will depend on significantly increased contact work, for which we will require additional personnel and other resources. END SUMMARY.

#### COUNTERTERRORISM

-----  
[1](#)2. (S) Fazul, Nabhan, el-Sudani, Abdi, and Ayrow must be removed from the Somali equation. Ref C discusses a short term objective of defeating al Qaida and its affiliates in Somalia and denying them a safe haven and platform for their operations. Use of "non-traditional liaison partners" (e.g. militia leaders) to gather intelligence and pressure AQ networks may seem unpalatable choices, particularly in light of civilian casualties in recent rounds of fighting in Mogadishu. However, these partners are the only means currently available to remove these five individuals from their positions in Mogadishu, from whence they are able to continue planning to strike U.S. interests, including soft targets that could include private Americans. This short term strategy becomes even more compelling given the fact that al Qaida is rebuilding its infrastructure in Kenya. Time is not on our side. Arguments from diplomatic and NGO colleagues that a subtler approach of engaging a broader variety of actors will help us address our CT concerns fail to take into account the immediacy of the threat posed by these five leaders, and underestimates their ability to undermine engagement efforts through intimidation, threats, and assassinations. We believe a strategy of broader engagement is necessary, but not sufficient, to achieve our CT goals. As such, we argue that the short term strategy of locating and nullifying high value targets remains valid, although modifications should be explored to improve the prospects for success.

13. (S/NF) In order to enhance our CT efforts, and to build relationships that will further our efforts in delivering humanitarian assistance and supporting institution building and government formation, Post sees a need to expand our contacts in Mogadishu and work to bring them into alignment with the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs). This will involve first supporting efforts to reconcile ARPFAT warlord/ministers with the government in Baidoa. We can use the relationships and resources available through SIMO to bring the ARPFAT leadership to Nairobi to meet with TFI leaders, starting with Assembly Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden. Given past affiliations between Sharif Hassan and select members of the ARPFAT leadership, he is the individual most likely to gain entree and perhaps convince the ministers that they are better off joining their forces with the TFIs. This is an option that has already been explored with Sharif Hassan and UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Francois Fall, both of whom thought it was worth pursuing. Given UN buy-in, we would be in a position to limit our role to behind the scenes facilitation. We would like to commence this effort as soon as it is possible to bring both sides to Nairobi. Timing will be affected by the fighting in Mogadishu, as the ARPFAT will be unwilling to leave Mogadishu if they believe territory will be lost in their absence. The potential duration of this effort is completely unpredictable. Efforts to reconcile the Mogadishu warlords with the other members of the TFIs have been a constant for at least the past three years. However, if successful this time around, such reconciliation will provide a boost for both efforts to counter the terrorist threat and to strengthen the TFIs.

14. (S) The next critical step is to identify and engage with moderate members of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC). Not all courts are preaching extremism, nor do all Mogadishu residents support the jihadist tendencies of some of the court leaders. However, Mogadishu residents appreciate the degree of order the courts have brought to their lives and will support the courts over the warlords, in spite of any misgivings they may have about the accompanying ideology. We must balance our association with the Mogadishu alliance with support to the moderates within the court system. Establishing such connections could weaken the network protecting the high value targets, will make clear that we are not attacking Islam, and will put us in a position to dialogue with entities that can either help Somalia transition to a more stable state or continue to foment instability in pursuit of their individual power objectives. To achieve this, we propose working with the League of Arab States (LAS) representatives in Nairobi for assistance in identifying the moderate leaders and for making initial contact with these leaders. Ideally, we would like to see the LAS working to bring the courts into dialogue with the TFIs as well. We have not yet approached the LAS with this proposal, so do not have a sense of whether they would be willing to be helpful. We are unable to estimate a time-frame for the evolution of this effort, but would like to commence contacts immediately.

15. (S) Finally, we need to enhance our contacts in the Ayr community and the Mogadishu business community. The more contacts we are able to establish with moderate members of these groups, the more we will be able to chip away at the relative solidarity currently enjoyed by the UIC. This is, by far, the longest term and most difficult component of the CT strategy because of our inability to enter Mogadishu. There is also not an obvious organization to act as an intermediary for us in such contacts, so we will be dependent on the travel schedule of Ayr and business leaders to Nairobi. For the moment, we can only implement this component on a catch-as-catch-can basis.

16. (C) It should be emphasized that we are not/not proposing a new, high-profile, US-led reconciliation effort in Somalia. On the contrary, we are proposing a series of modest initiatives which we believe would be fully supported by the UN special representative here and the main

international actors in Nairobi, initiatives which would probably not materialize unless the US lent quiet, behind-the-scenes support. It is essential that the USG remain in close touch with key UN, EU and African states involved in Somalia and that our activities be coordinated with them. UN, EU and key African officials in Nairobi have all expressed a keen interest in such coordination with the USG.

#### DELIVERY OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

17. (SBU) The activities we propose supporting are spelled out in detail in refs B and C. Most of these activities involve expansion of existing programs, so USAID East Africa believes additional activities can begin as soon as funding is made available. As we await funding, individual European countries, the European Union, and the UN are all substantially ramping up their activities inside Somalia. The longer we have to wait for funds, the more our comparative impact diminishes.

18. (SBU) USAID East Africa has long-established relationships within the Nairobi-based donor community, so is already engaged in discussions on coordination of both relief and development activities. Per ref C, USAID East Africa would like to continue to provide modest financial support to the Somalia Aid Coordination Body (being renamed the Somali Support Secretariat) to ensure a continuation of the excellent cooperation that has characterized donor relations with regard to Somalia. Post is also trying to find ways to ensure our voice is heard in the Coordination and Monitoring Committee (established in October 2004 to provide a means of coordinating key national, regional and international stakeholders' activities), which is chaired by the Somali prime minister and the UN SRSG. The meetings of this body are to take place in Baidoa for as long as the government is located there, limiting our ability to participate directly in critical meetings. However, we tend to be of a like mind with both Sweden and the UK, so may be able to draw on these relationships in the short term to have our views put forward. In order to fend off potential blocking maneuvers that would prevent the use of such proxies, we will need to engage the prime minister and the SRSG to gain concurrence for such an approach. As the largest bilateral donor to Somalia, we are in a strong position to make an argument for special consideration of our participation, but this will only be a short-term fix. If we are to be viable participants in such an entity, we will need to have the ability to travel to Baidoa for these meetings. (NOTE: As a larger issue, ever more activities are taking place in Baidoa. Our inability to travel to Baidoa puts us at risk of being left behind as other donors enhance their direct engagements with the TFIs. END NOTE.)

#### Institution Building and Government Formation

19. (C) When fighting in Mogadishu broke out on the eve of parliament's move to Baidoa, diplomats and NGOs expressed concern that this would be the death knell for the TFIs. On the contrary, the TFIs have never done better. While they are still exceedingly fragile, and their progress may only be noted by Somali-philes, members of the TFIs have gotten down to business in spite of activities in the capital. We (both the U.S. individually and the international community collectively) must do all in our power to publicly acknowledge this progress, however modest, and further bolster the institutions.

110. (C) Because we are not in a position to provide direct financial assistance to the TFIs, the nature of our support for the time being must be entirely diplomatic and symbolic. We currently seize every opportunity to meet with the President, Prime Minister, and Assembly Speaker when they are in Nairobi. It is critical that this triangular approach continue: If we distance ourselves from any one of the three, we will weaken the whole. President Yusuf will be the most difficult of the three to work with because of his old-school, anti-democratic tendencies. Our work with Yusuf

will have to involve a fair degree of careful monitoring and persuasion, in concert with our diplomatic counterparts, to ensure that he does not undermine the TFIs' fragile progress with his desire to be the strong-man leader of Somalia. Gedi clearly wants our support and is a much easier interlocutor than Yusuf, but he suffers from periodic popularity problems.

Sharif Hassan is a viable partner in terms of his willingness to work with us. Given the enormity of his task (trying to create a working parliament), our expectations for signs of success must be appropriately modest. We must seize any opportunities to help in this effort as a means of helping ensure the TFIs survive until the end of their mandate and are able to hand something over to a successor government. We must reinforce the concept of an independent parliament, but also a parliament that is able to work with the executive and make compromises in the national interest.

¶11. (C) While we are focused on the top levels of government, we must turn significant attention to the development of local administrations. It has already taken so long for the TFIs to get up and running that we have begun hearing reports of rural communities essentially writing off this latest government as another failed experiment. So much effort will be required for the TFIs to get their own house in order, it is difficult to see them extending their influence much beyond Baidoa, or wherever they ultimately settle, before the end of their mandate. Our development activities envision engagement at local levels, both to provide a peace dividend to these far-flung communities and to aid with the development of functioning and effective governing institutions at all levels. Our development assistance activities will have to be coupled with diplomatic engagement with the TFIs to develop connections between nascent local and national authorities. We are likely going to have to fend off a desire by the TFIs to centralize authority as much as possible - an arrangement that is completely unworkable in the immediate term. Diplomatic engagement will need to be carried out in concert with other donors, most likely the EU and its member states. Italy is already discussing the importance of regional authorities and the need to bolster their capacities. We will need to engage with the Italians to ensure our efforts are complimentary.

#### Sanctions

¶12. (C) The above proposals will rely on some key decisions regarding sanctions, both international and domestic. Our international partners are seeking harmony with us on the issue of the UN arms embargo. Many would support a selected lifting of the embargo in order to assist the TFIs with their security and stabilization plan, but would first like to know what stance the U.S. will take. On the domestic front, we need to examine sanctions such as those imposed under the Brooke Amendment and consider whether a waiver will be possible. Given the need to bolster the TFIs, Post believes such a waiver would be warranted.

#### Work Arounds

¶13. (C) As long as official American travel into Somalia is so heavily restricted, we will need to utilize other avenues available to us. We propose putting more effort into developing contacts in Eastleigh, Dadaab refugee camp, and the Kenyan-Somali border areas to at least gain a better understanding of conditions inside Somalia. We would also like to make greater use of the border areas as potential meeting locations for local Somali leaders who may find it difficult to get all the way to Nairobi. We must also better use our relationships with implementing partners (such as CARE) and donor colleagues (such as the UN) to broaden our knowledge base of circumstances inside Somalia.

#### Resources

¶14. (C) One Somalia Watcher, an under-sized RSO office, and a smattering of USAID staff who cover Somalia as part of larger portfolios will not be able to engage in all of the direct contacts necessary to make the above activities bear fruit.

